



**REPORT TO THE 62st MONTANA
LEGISLATURE**

**SHEEP, MOOSE, MULE DEER, ELK AND
MOUNTAIN GOAT AUCTION LICENSE
ACCOUNTS**

MCA 87-1-272 (5) (b)

**PREPARED BY
MONTANA FISH, WILDLIFE & PARKS**

January 2011

The 49th Montana State Legislature authorized the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission to auction one male sheep license each year to provide for the benefit of sheep. The 50th Montana State Legislature authorized the Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks Commission to auction one male Shiras moose license each year to provide for the benefit of moose. The 58th Montana State Legislature's provided authority for the sale of one male mule deer and one male elk auction/lottery license, and the 59th session provided authority for one mountain goat auction/lottery license. Rules and procedures to conduct the auction have been adopted by the commission each year and have been expanded to include all five species now available. The auction/lottery license rules provide for FWP to solicit proposals to conduct the auctions (and or lottery if appropriate) from conservation organizations involved in the conservation and management of these big game species. The commission reviews the proposals and selects an organization to conduct the auctions. Organizations can submit bids to conduct more than one species auction. Organizations that have been selected to auction the various species licenses for 1997-2010 are summarized in Table 1 and include the Boone and Crocket Club, Wild Sheep Foundation (formerly the Foundation for North American Wild Sheep), Mule Deer Foundation, Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation, Montana Outfitter and Guides Association, Skyline Sportsmen Association and Safari Club International (including the MT Chapter and the Great Falls chapter). The successful bidder for each of the auction licenses is allowed to hunt for a legal animal during the open season in any of the legally described species hunting districts as described in the appropriate hunting regulation.

Table 1. License Auction Sales History

Species	Year	Org	Bid Amount	Species	Year	Org	Bid Amount
Sheep	97	FNAWS	238,000	Moose	97	RMEF	17,000
	98	FNAWS	300,000		98	MOGA	14,000
	99	FNAWS	130,000		99	SSA	10,000
	00	FNAWS	95,000		00	SSA	11,000
	01	FNAWS	100,000		01	MOGA	13,500
	02	FNAWS	90,000		02	RMEF	20,000
	03	FNAWS	132,500		03	RMEF	19,000
	04	FNAWS	160,000		04	SSA	17,250
	05	FNAWS	160,000		05	BCC	15,000
	06	FNAWS	115,000		06	BCC	13,000
	07	FNAWS	140,000		07	FNAWS	20,000
	08	FNAWS	195,000		08	FNAWS	12,500
	09	WSF	245,000		09	RMEF	14,000
	10	WSF	<u>275,000</u>		10	RMEF	<u>11,000</u>
TOTAL			3,975,500	TOTAL			300,000

Species	Year	Org	Bid Amount	Species	Year	Org	Bid Amount
Mule Deer	04	MDF	6,250	Elk	04	RMEF	20,000
	05	MDF	6,700		05	RMEF	23,000
	06	MDF	13,000		06	RMEF	36,000
	07	MDF	15,000		07	RMEF	27,000
	08	MDF	13,500		08	RMEF	17,000
	09	MDF	8,500		09	RMEF	16,000
	10	MDF	<u>9,000</u>		10	RMEF	<u>12,000</u>
TOTAL			71,950	TOTAL			151,000

<u>Species</u>	<u>Year</u>	<u>Org</u>	<u>Bid Amount</u>
Mtn	06	RMEF	13,500
Goat	07	RMEF	9,000
	08	RMEF	9,000
	09	WSF	10,000
	10	SCI – GT Falls	<u>17,000</u>
TOTAL			40,500

BBC = Boone & Crockett Club

FNAWS = Foundation for North American Wild Sheep

MDF = Mule Deer Foundation

MOGA = Montana Outfitters & Guides Association

RMEF = Rocky Mountain Elk Foundation

SSA = Skyline Sportsmens Association

SCI – GT Falls = Safari Club International – GF

Revenues for bighorn sheep and Shiras moose auction licenses have fluctuated over time but remain very competitive with other western states, especially the bighorn sheep license. Revenues for both the mule deer and elk auction licenses decreased in the most recent year but the extensive opportunity afforded to the elk license holder in particular may help further increase those revenues over time. The mountain goat license was auctioned for the first time in 2006 and auction amounts increased in 2010.

Budgeted Allocations and Expenditures:

As prescribed by enabling legislation, funding is to be used for the beneficial management of the identified species. Funding is typically allocated for specific survey work to deal with localized issues, capture and relocation efforts, research efforts, habitat enhancement and herd health issues or in the case of bighorn sheep, a portion of the funding is allocated to a capital account for habitat protection. For FY08–09, funding by species was allocated as follows:

BIG GAME AUCTION EXPENDITURES FY08 - FY09 BIENNIUM

	<u>FY08</u>	<u>FY09</u>	<u>TOTAL</u>
Mountain Sheep Auction - Work	\$ 72,530	\$ 51,568	\$ 124,098
Mountain Sheep Auction – Capital	\$ 968,192	\$	\$ 968,192
Mountain Sheep Auction – Commission	\$ 19,500	\$ 24,500	\$ 44,000
TOTAL	\$ 1,060,222	\$ 76,068	\$ 1,136,290
Moose Auction - Field Work	\$	\$	\$
Moose Auction – Commission	\$ 1,250	\$ 1,400	\$ 2,650
TOTAL	\$ 1,250	\$ 1,400	\$ 2,650
Mule Deer Auction - Field Work	\$	\$	\$
Mule Deer Auction – Commission	\$ 1,300	\$ 850	\$ 2,800
TOTAL	\$ 1,300	\$ 850	\$ 1,450
Elk Auction - Field Work	\$	\$ 2,700	\$ 2,700

Elk Auction – Commission	\$ 1,700	\$ 1,600	\$ 3,300	
TOTAL	\$ 1,700	\$ 4,300	\$ 6,000	

Goat Auction - Field Work	\$	\$ 11,876	\$ 11,876	-
Goat Auction – Commission	\$ 900	\$ 1,000	\$ 1,900	
TOTAL	\$ 900	\$ 12,876	\$ 13,776	

Accomplishments:

Fieldwork included population monitoring (across Regions 1 – 6), capture and relocation efforts, and collection of herd health parameters. Work was initiated on the Bighorn Sheep Conservation Strategy. Capture efforts are summarized below.

Bighorn Sheep Capture and Herd Health

2008: Net gunning was used to capture 65 sheep (5M, 60F) from the Rocky Mountain Front (HD 422, 423 and 424) and these animals were relocated to the Highland Mountains (HD 340). Net gunning was used to capture 38 sheep (17M, 21F) from Wild Horse Island and these sheep were relocated to the Kootenai Wildlife Management Area (HD 100). All sheep were tested for herd health parameters. A total of 25 sheep were captured near Perma on the Flathead Reservation and relocated to the Rocky Boy Reservation – FWP assisted with blood sampling for herd health parameters. Tribal funds covered capture and relocation costs.

2009: Net gunning was used to capture 60 sheep (10M, 44F, 4ML, 2FL) from the Rocky Mountain Front (HD 422 and 424) which were relocated to Utah. All sheep were tested for herd health parameters. UT DOW was responsible for helicopter net gunning capture and relocation costs.

Moose:

No authorized field expenditures in either year. Moose funds are being banked to fund a research study into moose declines in western Montana.

Mule Deer:

No authorized field expenditures in either year.

Elk:

2009: Capture and GPS collar deployment for 30 cow elk in HD 314 as part of an on-going brucellosis risk assessment research project. Auction license dollars were used to augment other state and federal funding sources.

Mountain Goat

2008: Net gunning was used to capture 9 goats (1 M, 8 F) from Round Butte (HD 447) and 1 goat (1 F) from the Highwood Mountains (HD 460) and the animals were relocated to Ear Mountain (HD 442). Capture and relocation costs were covered by SCI. All goats were tested for herd health parameters.

2009: Net gunning was used to capture 15 goats (2M, 12F, 1MK) from the Crazy Mountains (HD 313) which were relocated to Ear Mountain (HD 422). Capture and relocation costs were covered by MFWP and SCI. All goats were tested for herd health parameters.

Bighorn Sheep Capital Program Projects

During the last biennium (FY2008-2009), auction funds were used to acquire approximately 17 acres of sheep winter range were added to the Kootenai WMA in Lincoln, County (FWP Region 1); approximately 49 acres were acquired for the Bighorn Viewing Area WMA in Sanders, County (FWP Region 2) in partnership with FNAWS, SCI, Flathead Wildlife, Plains Science Class and Mr. Les Carpenter; and 220 acres were acquired for the Stucky Ridge WMA in Deer Lodge County (FWP Region 2) in partnership with Habitat Montana, American Land Conservancy, FNAWS, SCI and Anaconda Sportsmen.

During the current biennium, approximately half of the auction proceeds were set aside for sheep habitat conservation. No significant big horn sheep project proposals were forwarded, so the funds are being banked for future conservation efforts.